

**Remediation and Redevelopment Program
2002-2003 Annual Report
RR-718 March, 2004**

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Our first on-line annual report summarizes RR staff achievements during a very challenging period in the program's history.

By The Numbers - Cleanups, Closeouts and More

The hard facts about our efforts to help investigate and clean up contaminated properties, including some juicy economic benefits thrown in for good measure.

Success! - Case Studies Galore

Some good old fashioned stories about staff working with the public to prevent spills and clean up contaminated properties.

The Future - Turning Challenges Into Opportunities

In this era of regulatory reform, staff understand and look forward to the challenges ahead as we seek new solutions and alternative ways to clean up and reuse contaminated sites.

REMEDIATION AND REDEVELOPMENT

On-line and On Target in 2002-2003

The Remediation and Redevelopment Program, like every program in the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, faced serious challenges in 2002 and 2003. Budget and staff cuts forced everyone in the program to step back and seriously re-evaluate our needs and priorities. The program's goal during this difficult period was not only to efficiently do the same job with less staff, money and resources, but to successfully continue its mission of helping restore the environmental and economic health of Wisconsin communities.

To that end, we present the 2002-2003 Annual Report as our first on-line summary of the program's most recent highlights. By saving the costs of printing full-color, higher-end publications and reaching directly to our customers through the Internet, the RR Program continues to take the lead in "paperless government". Each section of this year's annual report has a link to the stories you'll want to read about -

- * Completed cleanups of contaminated properties. Program staff approved approximately 500 cleanups in 2002-03 under the Program's nationally recognized environmental clean-up rules. These rules are consistent for all types of contamination, provide choices and flexibility among remedial options, save time and money, and can proceed without DNR reviews while maintaining a high level of public health and environmental protection. Staff have now approved more than 11,000 cleanups of contaminated properties by working cooperatively with those who are responsible.

- * Continued success in state-funded cleanups of orphan sites. When a responsible party is unknown, unable or unwilling to conduct environmental restoration when a cleanup is necessary, the RR Program protects human health and the environment with a state-funded cleanup. Those cleanups include projects like the one in the city of Kenosha, where DNR's \$600,000 investment resulted in a property value increase from \$0 to \$50 million, with approximately \$890,000 in tax revenue in 2003. The RR Program also recovers state-funded costs through legal action where appropriate - since 1994 the DNR has recovered \$14 million from responsible parties.

- * Being aggressive in spill response and prevention action. In addition to the staff's prompt response to approximately 800 spills last year, which helped reduce environmental impacts and costs, the program also helped avoid hundreds of other spills through education and prevention efforts.

- * Delivering another successful year of brownfields cleanup and redevelopment. The RR Program maintains its high level of achievement in brownfields efforts, including the Brownfields Site Assessment Grant (SAG) program. In 2002-2003, the DNR awarded 54 grants to 38 Wisconsin communities for a total of \$1.7 million; 49 of the communities received small grants (up to \$30,000) and five received large grants (between \$30,000

and \$100,000). More than 160 communities have received \$4.8 million in SAG grants since the program started in 1998, and the program continues to be oversubscribed by a 2-to-1 margin.

* Maintaining momentum for the Dry Cleaner Environmental Response Fund (DERF). The DNR's Dry Cleaner fund reimbursed more than \$1 million to investigate and clean-up properties contaminated by dry-cleaner chemicals in 2002. The program, created in 1997, collects solvent and license fees from approximately 320 active dry cleaners. To date, more than 100 investigations of contaminated properties have been approved, 32 sites have been reimbursed for investigation and clean-up costs, and five sites have completed remedial actions and are now closed.

We hope you enjoy this year's version of our Annual Report. We will continue to work towards reducing the costs of our efforts while maintaining a high level of performance in remediating and redeveloping the contaminated properties that still remain in Wisconsin. So look for more innovative changes in the RR Program, and look for another "user-friendly" annual report in the near future!

RR Program Managers and Staff

By The Numbers Cleanups, Closeouts and More

Providing a narrative of our efforts during the past two years helps people understand the RR program's big picture. But for others, seeing the cold, hard facts is the only way to go. Through the links below, we give you the RR Program "by the numbers".

Summary of Completed Cleanups - Find out how many contaminated properties have been cleaned up and "closed out," not only in 2002 and 2003, but since we started tracking these figures back in 1986:

- [Closure Summary](#)

Summary of Redevelopment Assistance Actions - This table charts the variety of activities completed by RR Program staff since 1994, when the State Legislature passed the Land Recycling Act, providing Wisconsin with the first tool for redevelopment:

- [Redevelopment Summary](#)

"Redevelopment Assistance" actions include:

- negotiated agreements for clean up of contaminated properties;
- letters limiting liability for contamination that originated off the property;
- letters clarifying general liability for contamination;
- review of lenders' environmental assessments for liability exemption;
- cleanup agreements supporting municipal cancellation of unpaid property taxes;
- approval to enter the voluntary liability exemption process (VPLE) for cleanup of a contaminated property;
- certificates of completion and closure for sites in the VPLE process, limiting liability for clean up of an entire property;
- letters limiting contamination liability for lessees; and
- approval of liability exemption for local governments conducting cleanup of contamination.

* Program Trends - A helpful page that keeps track of new sites coming into the program versus properties we've cleaned up or transferred to another agency [for example, sites with petroleum contamination that were transferred to the Department of Commerce under the Petroleum Environmental Cleanup Fund Awards (PECFA) Program]:

- [Performance Measures Data](#)

Program Facts and Figures - We would never forget about our other program areas, where we continued to chalk up productive numbers in 2002-2003.

- [Quick Facts About The RR Program](#)
- [Brownfields Site Assessment Grant Program Figures](#)
- [Dry Cleaner Environmental Response Fund Facts](#)

SUCCESS!

Case Studies Galore

Brownfields Cleanup and Redevelopment

It's amazing to think how far we've come cleaning up brownfields, not just in Wisconsin but across the nation. Prior to 1990, the word "brownfields" created as much confusion as the contaminated properties themselves, with complex liability issues and looming lawsuits. Early federal estimates put the number of brownfields in the country around 500,000, and Wisconsin figures hovered around 10,000.

Not so today. Brownfields - defined as abandoned, idle or underused properties where real or perceived contamination pose an obstacle to redevelopment - are a hot commodity for many private developers and a political plus for legislators and local governments. While many brownfields still remain, financial and liability incentives created by the state in the past 10 years - including the DNR's Brownfields Site Assessment Grant Program and the state's local government liability exemption - have turned these blighted eyesores into economic successes. We highlight three examples below.

[**Oshkosh Properties Get New Lease On Life**](#)

Learn how this former foundry site became part of the city's bigger downtown redevelopment plans.

[**Kenosha Lakefront: Just a Trolley Ride Away**](#)

This former American Motors Plant was an eyesore for decades along Kenosha's lakefront. See how state and local efforts helped transform this brownfield area into a successful downtown redevelopment.

[**Marathon Rubber Bounces Back**](#)

Learn how a former boot and raincoat manufacturing plant was turned into a local park with low to middle-income housing for Wausau residents.

Spill Prevention

Helping prevent spills of chemicals and other hazardous substances has been the job of the DNR for more than a quarter century. Our well-trained staff work with a variety of local law enforcement and government officials when spills occur - like this spill of thousands of pounds of pizza dough onto more than 20 miles of Chippewa County highway in 2002 - but they also play an important, less-heralded role as educators. Preventing spills and exposure to hazardous substances through trainings, presentations and educational materials saves lives, protects the environment and prevents costly cleanups.

[**Bloomer Site Benefits From Spill Prevention**](#)

Learn how DNR officials, in partnership with a local business, helped keep potential spills from damaging a high quality stream in Northwestern Wisconsin.

Dry Cleaners

Thanks to an innovative program called the Dry Cleaner Environmental Response Fund (DERF), Wisconsin is one of the states leading the way in cleaning up contamination that can occur at dry cleaning facilities.

The DERF is a DNR fund created by the State Legislature in 1997 that collects approximately \$1 million per year through fees from licensed dry cleaners. Dry cleaners and some property owners with contamination from dry-cleaning solvents may be eligible to receive reimbursement for investigation and cleanup costs. Since the program began, more than 100 sites have either begun or completed investigations, and five sites have completed their cleanups.

[Reaching For The Stars - Green Bay Dry Cleaner, DNR Partner With Pollution Prevention](#)

This business owner decided to go the extra dry-cleaning mile and worked with the DNR to make his facility a five-star dry cleaning operation.

Want to see more Success Stories? Click Here:

http://dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/rr/cleanup/rr_success.htm

The Future Turning Challenges Into Opportunities

Despite what many would view as dour budget and staff circumstances, the Remediation and Redevelopment Program accomplished many program goals in 2002 and 2003. We continued to cleanup and "close" contaminated properties, we responded with investigation and cleanup funds for the state's orphaned contaminated sites, and our brownfields, dry cleaner and spill response programs are some of the best in the nation.

We understand, however, that the job is far from finished. Many more contaminated properties - each with unique obstacles of their own - remain. We also understand that, in this era of regulatory reform, we must continue to look for flexible solutions and alternative ways of dealing with those contaminated sites, ways that lower unnecessary regulatory burdens, keep sensible environmental protections in place, and promote business while maintaining our high quality of life.

We look forward to turning these challenges into opportunities. As the next two years progress, please continue to visit this web site and our link to the Annual Report. We'll keep you informed on our efforts to lead in the technical arena, including recently released hazardous waste, natural attenuation and contaminated sediment guidelines, which have helped simplify cleanups and spurred redevelopment.

And watch us reach new goals, such as establishing a new brownfields environmental insurance program, enhancing the Dry Cleaner Environmental Response Fund and expanding the Brownfield Site Assessment Grant Program, as well as continuing our successful cleanup and redevelopment of contaminated properties.

To Learn More

- Hazardous Waste Guidance: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/rr/archives/pubs/RR705.pdf>
- Natural Attenuation Guidance: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/rr/archives/pubs/RR671.pdf>
- Brownfields Environmental Insurance:
http://dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/rr/brownfields/bsg/brflds_insurance.pdf
- Dry Cleaner Environmental Reimbursement Fund:
<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/rr/financial/dryclean.html>
- Brownfields Site Assessment Grant rule:
http://dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/rr/wi_regs/index.htm
- Remediation and Redevelopment Home Page: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/rr/>